stores, ordnance, ammunition and transportation, and raising it to a very high point of efficiency by carrying out for months a thorough system of organization and discipline. The next time the two combatants met, it was morally certain, therefore, that the Federal army would be a very formidable force, not only in numbers and equipment, but in tone and *morale*, a force which might very possibly defeat or even destroy its weaker antagonist, and which could not, humanly speaking, be itself destroyed or disintegrated by any blows which that weaker antagonist would be capable of delivering.

Taking these things into account, therefore, what could have been more important for the Southern Confederacy than to make the attempt to grapple with this Federal army before it had acquired the powers of resistance which organization and discipline were certain, if only the requisite time were granted, to confer upon it ? What "threatened positions" were there, the importance of defending which could be compared for a moment with the urgency of breaking up the Federal Army of the Potomac before it had attained its full strength?

But Mr. Davis on this, as on other occasions, failed to grasp the situation; of the two policies,—the offensive and the defensive,—one of which

he was necessarily compelled to adopt, he chose the one which promised the fewer advantages.[1] No one can say what might not have been the effect of a severe

[1] For a very able discussion of the merits of the offensive policy for the Confederate States, not only at this juncture but throughout the war, see Beauregard's remarks in i B. & L., 221-223.